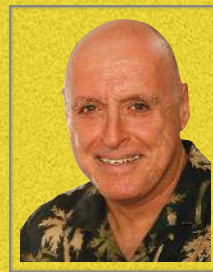


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



356 Should You “Script” Your Networking Events?

If you have trouble talking to people at networking events, I may have an idea you'll find really helpful. I'm Jerry Roberts and today, it's about building confidence and setting up topics you're comfortable talking about ahead of time. That's coming next, on The Extra Point.

I went from being an introvert (still am) who was virtually paralyzed at networking functions, to someone who painfully learned how to do it right, and eventually wrote a course to help others get over the same problem.

Face-to-face marketing, as I call it, is the single most powerful tool you've got to get a great job, persuade someone to invest in your idea, or sell a prospective customer. Most people know this, but too many of us have big trouble in networking, often because we're nervous about what we'll say to others.

When I refer to “scripting” an event, it means we become actor and director in all the things that go into making our networking time more fulfilling and successful. We don't just swap a little conversation and a business card and then hope something good comes out of it.

Act 1 — Find three topics you can talk about easily. One could be relevant to the crowd you're in with, another of a general nature, and a third could be a project you're involved with or a special interest you have. When asked what you do, you might respond with, “I'm an HR consultant, helping a number of companies navigate the employment laws, but I get the best return on my investment being an unpaid reading coach at my son's school. I really love it...now how about you?”

A couple of tips. Instead of copying most people, asking, “What do you do?,” how about “What are you working on?” It's different. One more, after introducing yourself, another opener could be...“What brings you here tonight?”

Act 2 — Get there early, even before the event opens and talk to people already there. This will get you warmed up and maybe you'll pick up on ideas for other discussions you'll have. You also get first crack at making a contact.

Act 3 — Make your entrance. Get in the room, scope it out for a minute or two and then start meeting people you don't know. The ones you already know can wait. I'm serious. Get going.

Act 4 — If you see someone whom you feel is “important,” don't think, “Why would they ever want to talk to me?” Instead, what do you know about them? Do they own a business you frequent? Compliment them on their operation, telling them a story about your experience. I knew someone who was terrified at the level of success and wealth in a room one night, but fought the fear and introduced herself to every powerful person. The result? She gained an investor for her fledgling company. Don't forget, you want to meet people and they want to meet you. That's why they are there.

Act 5 — Move around the room and meet as many people as you can. Introverts need the experience.

Act 6 — Follow up. Follow up. Follow up.

Face-to-face marketing can bring opportunities that can elevate a career. Don't let fear short-change you. If you need to, get that script working, and lay out your plan. You can do this.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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